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ABSTRACT

This document examines the many roles of the community college in teacher education. The community college can play a crucial role in the response to expected teacher shortages. Many community colleges provide the first year or two of undergraduate courses for a bachelor's degree in teacher education. Some states do not allow community colleges to offer teacher education courses. Those that do, have various kinds of articulation agreements that support the community college role in the process. The 2+2 agreements can be problematic when the community college offers courses that are specialized and/or are considered required courses in the major. Some colleges offer an Associate Degree in Teacher Education. Maryland, motivated partly by the desire for greater systemic efficiency in transfer, is leading the way in developing such a degree. Four-year colleges that support this degree may reflect changes in their accreditation of four-year programs. Some community colleges are developing community college Baccalaureate in Teacher Education programs. Florida, Nevada, and Utah have passed legislation permitting certain community colleges to offer these degrees. Some argue that these programs help to serve a student population unable to transfer to four-year institutions. The authors also examine the community college role in offering alternative certification and professional development programs. (Contains 25 references.) (NB)

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Community College Roles in Teacher Education

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Community College Roles in Teacher Education

Perceptions of a massive teacher shortage facing the United States are sending panic waves throughout the educational system. A number of factors have contributed to this perceived shortage, including an explosion in the number of K-12 students and recent legislation in many states mandating fewer students in K-12 classes. While small classes are conducive to student learning, having more small classes means hiring more teachers to staff them. Other factors affecting teacher shortage include a massive dropout rate of beginning teachers and a high projected rate of retirement of experienced teachers. Of those beginning teaching in 1993-94, almost 10% dropped out of teaching within three years (Quality Counts, 2000). Data from recent surveys indicate that the departure rate for teachers is 13.2 percent a year, as compared to 11 percent in many other professions (Viadero, 2002). The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future reports that more than 30 percent of all teachers leave within five years. In large urban districts, it is 50 percent. In citing these percentages, Vartan Gregorian, President of the Carnegie Corporation, states that "our public schools leak talent like a sieve" (Gregorian, 2001). In addition, those who persist eventually retire and need to be replaced. The U.S. Department of Education anticipates retirements of almost 40% of current teachers by 2010 (Allen, 2002).

Although the current teacher shortage is largely a result of departures from the teaching ranks, the need to have between 2 and 2.5 million more teachers enter or re-enter K-12 classrooms by the end of this decade is real (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Feistritzer, 1998; Husser, 1999). This need is complicated by the need for teachers to reflect the racial/ethnic composition of current K-12 students. More than one-third of students in schools today are of color (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1996), compared to only about a tenth of teachers (Synder, Hoffman, & Geddes, 1998). The shortage of teachers of color in urban schools, particularly in the areas of math, science, and special education, is particularly troubling (Recruiting New Teachers, 2000; 2002). Another complicating factor is that most of the current teacher shortage is restricted to the high school level, to certain subjects (math, the sciences, special education, technology education, and bilingual education), and to inner cities or more isolated rural areas.

Given the teacher shortage, national, state and local leaders are now seeing the community college as an important resource in increasing and maintaining the teaching force. First of all, the community college is an excellent source of potential teachers since more than 40% of all undergraduates are enrolled in community colleges, which also have the highest percent of students of color. Additionally, urban community colleges are excellent recruiting sites for urban K-12 teachers since urban community college students "may be less prone to the culture shock that affects many teachers from outside the urban community" (Recruiting New Teachers, 2002, p. 15). Also, teachers typically come from families where they are first-generation college students, and many community college students are the first in their family to attend or graduate from college (Recruiting New Teachers, 2002). Many community colleges also have strong ties to local high schools and could recruit future teachers through establishing links with such high school groups as Future Teachers of America.

In this paper we will describe the various roles the community college currently plays in teacher education and indicate the controversies or kinds of criticism associated with each role. In concluding the paper, we will recommend some practices for continued community college involvement in teacher education in the coming decades.

The Traditional Role of Providing Transfer Courses

Preparing teachers has long been part of the community college mission. A number of early junior colleges had their roots in normal schools or teacher preparation schools (Witt, Wattenbarger, Gollattscheck, & Suppiger, 1994). Also, during the first part of the 20th century, many private junior colleges offered teacher education as one form of semiprofessional education. During that time period, particularly in Missouri and the Southern states, a teacher could be certified after two years of college education that included teacher education courses (Koos, 1925).

As requirements for teacher certification increased to include a four-year degree, the role of community colleges in teacher education switched to providing the first year or two of a baccalaureate degree through the colleges' traditional transfer mission. Community college students who hope to obtain a bachelor's degree in teacher education can transfer up to the first two years of the degree. Not all states, e.g., New York and Mississippi, permit community colleges to offer teacher education courses. In those that do, some of the transferred courses might be courses that could count toward a major in teacher education.

Over the years individual community colleges and four-year schools have partnered to develop various kinds of articulation agreements to support this traditional role. One type of agreement articulates how a general Associate of Arts degree fits within a baccalaureate in teacher education. Additionally, community colleges offering beginning teacher education courses have developed programmatic 2+2 teacher education articulation agreements with one or more four-year schools. In states such as Illinois, courses are offered and articulated according to a statewide articulation agreement that provides students majoring in elementary, secondary, early childhood, and special education with specific direction as to which community college courses in general education and the major will transfer to the institutions in the statewide agreements (Illinois Articulation Initiative, Retrieved March 27, 2003 from http://www.itransfer.org/IAI/Majors/).

Controversies Regarding This Role

While the concept of 2+2 agreements in teacher preparation is consistent with the community college's transfer mission, the actual development of these agreements can be controversial or problematic. Not surprisingly, introductory courses in teacher education have a better chance of being included in articulation agreements than do more specialized courses or elective teacher education courses. Typical two-year college teacher education courses accepted into four-year teacher education programs include generic courses such as Introduction to Education, The Exceptional Child or The Exceptional Individual, and Issues in Diversity in Education. Transferability of required courses within a particular major, such as Introduction to Special Education, are more

problematic because these courses are considered required courses in the major rather than support courses which may be required but are not necessarily "owned" by the major.

Concerns cited by four-year college faculty regarding transfer of two-year college teacher education courses include comprehensiveness and accuracy of material covered, qualifications of faculty from the sending institution, and the nature of the supervision of observation/clinical hours that count toward certification requirements. Additionally, reaching agreement about transfer of community college education courses is sometimes problematic because some four-year institutions do not start their teacher education program until the junior or even senior year. In these programs accepting community college teacher education courses would mean accepting lower-division courses into an upper-division program.

The Role of Offering an Associate Degree in Teacher Education

Developing and maintaining institution-specific articulation agreements is time-consuming but necessary as long as community colleges do not have a teacher education associate degree incorporated into a statewide articulation agreement. Motivated partly by the desire for greater systemic efficiency in transfer, Maryland is leading the way in developing such an associate degree in teacher education. Prior to the recent development of its Associate of Arts in Teacher Education, an estimated 300 individual articulation agreements had been negotiated by Maryland community colleges and four-year public and private schools with teacher education programs (Amid Teacher Shortages, 2001). Arizona is another state working on a statewide associate degree in teacher education and hopes to have one in place by fall 2003 (Gaskin, Helfgot, Parsons, & Solley, in press).

Some four-year colleges' willingness to support the development of a state-level associate degree in teacher education and transfer this degree into their teacher education programs may reflect recent changes in accreditation of four-year programs. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the major teacher education accrediting body, changed in 2000 to a results-oriented, outcomes-based model of assessment (NCATE, 2002). This model means that mid-point teacher preparation outcomes can be developed, as has been done in some states, e.g., Missouri. Using mid-point preparation student outcomes as the end point for their teacher education program, community colleges can develop a teacher education program that will articulate clearly and cleanly with four-year teacher education programs that also have mid-point student outcomes.

With the exception of those four-year institutions whose teacher education programs do not start until the junior or senior year, the associate degree in teacher education is likely to be acceptable to four-year colleges and universities if they have been partners in developing the degree and articulating the two-year and four-year college teacher education programs. Many senior institutions are grateful for the teacher education enrollments and some are even enthusiastic.

Controversies Regarding this Role

Within the two-year sector, an argument used against the degree is that its creation adds to the proliferation of associate degree names and titles. In 1984 the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) issued a policy statement against degree proliferation. Since the current president of AACC, George Boggs, has been quite active in support of an increased role for community colleges in teacher education, including the development of an associate degree in this field, the generic two-year college concern about proliferation of associate degrees seems to not apply for this particular associate degree.

Many four-year institutions are supportive of community colleges offering an associate degree in teacher education, and almost all are supportive of community colleges providing traditional transfer-level general education courses for the first two years of a baccalaureate in teacher education. These community college roles in teacher education reflect and stem from a mission focus on providing the first two years of a four-year education. Four-year colleges may be less willing to accept the following three emerging teacher education roles of community colleges: offering the community college baccalaureate in teacher education, providing alternative certification programs, and offering community college in-service professional development for teachers. These roles could be viewed as examples of mission creep, popularly defined as expanding a college's role in higher education beyond what it should be.

The Role of Offering a Community College Baccalaureate in Teacher Education

Development of a community college baccalaureate in teacher education is part of a broader effort on the part of some community colleges to develop programs in response to local or statewide workforce needs and to improve access to the baccalaureate. Several states such as Florida, Nevada, and Utah have passed legislation permitting certain community colleges to offer the baccalaureate degree in selected fields. In 2001 Florida's St. Petersburg College began offering a bachelor's degree in teacher education and two more Florida community colleges, including Miami-Dade, have won approval to do so. Indeed, a national organization devoted to furthering the development of community college baccalaureates has sprung up: the Community College Baccalaureate Association.

Advocates contend that the community college baccalaureate is a logical step in the institution's efforts to serve a student population unfamiliar with higher education. According to Kenneth Walker, a major advocate of this new degree, these students "are not always interested in, or capable of transferring, to traditional baccalaureate degree colleges or universities" (2001, p. 19). Pursuing a bachelor's degree at a community college is financially and psychologically more feasible than attending a senior institution for many of these students. Additionally, community college students will have access to a baccalaureate in certain specialized vocational areas that most senior institutions are not able or willing to offer.

Controversies Regarding This Role

Those who oppose the community college baccalaureate are concerned about its impact on the community college mission and perceptions that such a degree would be considered inferior to a baccalaureate from a four-year college or university (Manzo, 2001). It is not clear who would consider the degree inferior, however. Perhaps four-year colleges and universities might, but students may not, and it is not yet known how K-12 systems considering graduates of community college baccalaureate programs would view them. Concerns about effect on mission are more compelling and are sometimes linked to the fear that community colleges offering baccalaureates would focus less on their transfer function or maybe even seek to eliminate it (Skolnik, 2001).

Within this context, development of a community college baccalaureate in teacher education is a dramatic, non-traditional, and controversial way to increase community college involvement in teacher education. It means the community college is no longer a partner with four-year colleges in offering teacher education, but rather a competitor—for students and for K-12 placement sites. Regarding the latter, for a baccalaureate in teacher education, the community college would need to offer clinical and in-service teacher training that requires the cooperation of local K-12 schools to provide sites in which to place teacher education majors. Not known at this time is whether local schools would give preference to students in teacher education programs offered by four-year institutions or to students in community college baccalaureate teacher education programs.

Also, accrediting issues will arise with NCATE and the other key accrediting body for teacher education, the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC). If asked to consider accrediting a community college baccalaureate teacher education program, NCATE and TEAC will need to decide if the same accreditation process used for four-year colleges will apply.

Applying four-year college accreditation requirements for teacher education to two-year institutions could have a substantial impact upon the rest of the institution. The teacher education program would need faculty with doctoral degrees and some interest in conducting research about teacher education. Most likely, these faculty would be paid more than the average community college faculty member. Thus implementation of a baccalaureate in teacher education could result in a two-tier system of community college faculty with possible impact upon the community college mission.

The Role of Providing Alternative Certification

In addition to the projected need for between 2 to 2.5 million teachers within this decade, requirements aimed at improving the quality of the teaching force have also put pressure upon providers of teacher education to do more-and do it quickly and well. Thus, the need for alternative routes to teacher certification. As of July 2002, 45 states and the District of Columbia have some form of alternative teacher certification program (Feistritzer, February 11, 2002).

Whether offered at two-year or four-year colleges, alternative teacher certification programs enroll a high percentage of non-traditional students (National Center for Education Information, 2002). A real benefit to students in community college

alternative certification programs is that community colleges are experienced in providing effective learning opportunities for non-traditional students. The characteristics of students in alternative teacher certification programs are very similar to the characteristics of today's community college student population in general. Another positive aspect to community college alternative certification programs derives from the institution's reputation for providing a supportive environment for student learning.

Controversies Surrounding this Role

There are controversies about alternative certification programs in general, regardless of which institutional type offers them. At issue is whether these programs can prepare students as effectively as traditional certification programs. Writing from the North Carolina perspective, Gov. James B. Hunt Jr., and Molly Corbett Broad, President of University of North Carolina, noted the following:

> Painful as it is to admit, North Carolina, like several other states, have legislated some 'quick fixes' to help alleviate the teacher shortage. Some of these legislative actions tilt too far in the direction of addressing quantity without equal concern for quality. Emergency certificates and other approaches may help fix the quantity problem temporarily but make the quality problem worse. (Hunt & Broad, p. 2)

How effective alternative certification programs are may depend on the *type* of program. High-end programs target persons who already hold a bachelor's degree or higher in a field outside education. Participants in such programs, like the one offered by the Collin County Community College District in Texas, attend formal instruction in education and teach with a mentor. Another type of high-end program also targets baccalaureate degree holders, but is more individually designed, with transcript analysis, individually designed in-service training, and coursework required of participants. These types of alternative certification programs also employ effective features that may not be found in more traditional teacher education programs, such as year-long teaching internships under the guidance of a practicing teacher/mentor. The effectiveness of the teachers who complete these programs has helped to alleviate some of the concern over quality. A 2002 Fordham Foundation report also states that "most researchers have concluded that alternative route teachers are at least as effective as their conventionally-trained counterparts, if not more so" (Kwiatkowski, 2002, p. 1).

Another kind of alternative certification program, emergency credentialing, is more expedient, but provides little or no education and training before new recruits enter the classroom, often without any on-site support or supervision. While working in a school, the new teacher simultaneously enrolls in traditional teacher education coursework to earn full certification.

An additional concern about providing alternative certification programs is their cost. One study found that preparing a teacher in one of the better alternative certification programs cost approximately 75 percent more than if that teacher had been prepared in a traditional program (Hawley as cited in Kwiatkowski, 2000).

A common criticism leveled at community colleges offering alternative teacher certification programs is that their faculty do not possess degrees at a high enough level

(i.e., the doctorate) to teach in these programs. Also, as indicated earlier, some see community college provision of alternative teacher certification as "mission creep" because the two-year schools are teaching some courses that could be construed as junior and senior-level courses.

The Role of Offering In-service Teacher Education Professional Development

Data show that schools can expect to lose between one-third and one-half of their beginning teachers within five years of their joining the schools (Gregorian, August 2001). Continuing professional development can serve to deter their exit through providing teachers with the support they need in their first years of teaching. Additionally, professional development provides new knowledge in subject areas and pedagogy for both beginning and experienced teachers. "On-site coaching, study groups, graduate coursework, instructional supervision, observation of master teachers or model programs at work, and participation in professional networks or curriculum development work" are some examples of professional development and in-service activities (Hirsch, Koppich, & Knapp, 2001, p. 36). Such activities may be especially critical for teachers with emergency credentials.

Many community colleges have provided professional development courses and programs for teachers for some time. When offered, common development areas in include using instructional technology, infusing math, writing, and critical thinking concepts into the classroom, and teaching methods and strategies for special populations, such as non-native English speakers. Some states target special knowledge areas for teachers. As example, California allows teachers to count professional development activities in tolerance and first aid toward the number of state-mandated hours they must have (Hirsch, Koppich, & Knapp, 2001, p. 40).

Those states permitting community colleges to offer the baccalaureate in teacher education and/or alternative certification programs may likely be those states with state education agencies that recognize community college credits as acceptable for continuing professional development or in-service credits for teachers. For example, in Arizona, Rio de Salado, part of the Maricopa Community College District, offers a post-baccalaureate alterative certification program. Other colleges in this district offer in-service teacher education opportunities like the opportunity to earn English as a Second Language endorsement.

Controversies Surrounding This Role

As with alternative certification programs, regardless of where they are offered, professional development and in-service teacher education programs are not without controversy. The results of a 1996 survey by the National Center for Education Information revealed that only 37 percent of teachers thought their education courses and in-service activities were "very valuable" and 44 percent "somewhat valuable" (Feitstritzer, 1999). A report by the Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy notes that the quality and duration of the professional development is as important as the type of

activity, with brief "one-shot" workshops far too common (Hirsch, Koppich, & Knapp, 2001, p. 40).

A drawback to community college delivery of professional development for teachers is that they cannot award graduate level credit, which teachers typically need to advance on the pay scale and maintain their teaching certificates. In Mississippi, for example, the state underwrites graduate coursework for teachers serving in geographical shortage areas by providing scholarships for master's degrees for these teachers (Hirsch, Kippich, & Knapp, 2001, p. 39). Until reward systems expand to allow community colleges to participate more fully in professional development activities for teachers, the community college role may be limited. Additionally, some four-year institutions may fight this role because the community college would be a competitor in professional development efforts. This competition would be viewed as another example of mission creep.

Summary and Recommendations

With a long history of participation in teacher education, community colleges are now branching out and extending their efforts past their traditional mission focus of providing the first two years of an undergraduate degree in teacher education. Some states such as Maryland are extending this traditional role by developing an associate degree in teacher education. In other states more non-traditional and controversial efforts are taking place. Community colleges that offer a baccalaureate degree in teacher education, and/or provide alternative teacher certification, and/or provide professional and in-service development programs have moved beyond the traditional community college role of offering courses and programs conceived of as appropriate for freshmen and sophomores. In some eyes, their efforts may be viewed as mission creep or inappropriate encroachments on senior institutions' territory. In other eyes, these efforts may be viewed as entirely appropriate and fitting, given the reluctance or inability of some four-year institutions to meet pressing state-level needs to prepare more teachers.

The traditional transfer role of the community college in teacher education will continue but there needs to be greater state-level coordination of cross-institutional teacher education efforts, especially the development of articulation agreements (Moore, 2000). At the most basic level, each state should maintain an electronic repository of the individually negotiated institutional 2+2 teacher education articulation agreements. Those states motivated by concern for greater systemic efficiency should encourage the development of fully articulated teacher education majors through their existing associate degrees, with specific direction for general education and major courses. In addition to increasing systemic efficiency, state-level encouragement of statewide articulation agreements developed specifically for teacher education majors in elementary, secondary, early childhood, and special education would show support of community colleges' traditional transfer role in teacher education, but also endorse the community colleges as partners with four-year colleges in providing teacher education courses. Another way to increase systemic efficiency is for states to encourage the development of an Associate of Arts in Teaching that would be included in a state-level articulation agreement for public institutions.

State-level encouragement and support of a more non-traditional role for the community college will depend on what that role is and what the needs of a particular state are. Development of community college baccalaureates is a drastic step in blurring mission lines between sectors, with the community college teacher education baccalaureate but a small piece of a larger issue. Although the need for more teachers has been one of the arguments used to advance the cause of the community college baccalaureate, its users need to be cautious and remember it is a time-bound argument. There have been teacher shortage crises before and then teacher gluts. After perceptions of the current teacher shortage wane, the community college baccalaureate could endure as a monument to these perceptions at the possible expense of the community college mission and culture. It is vital that states authorizing these degrees develop longitudinal studies of the effect of offering baccalaureate degrees upon the community college. States also need to compare graduates of community college baccalaureate and four-year teacher education programs on measures such as scores on teacher education state and national examinations and retention in the K-12 workforce.

Alternative certification programs, whether offered by two-year or four-year colleges, are non-traditional paths that, like the community college baccalaureate in teacher education, have been prompted by perceptions of current teacher shortage. Once the crisis is over, alternative certification will have enmeshed itself into the system of teacher education. As with the community college baccalaureate, states need to study the effects of alternative certificate programs and compare the performance of their graduates with those of more traditional programs. The performance and retention in teaching of graduates from community college alternative certification programs should also be compared with that of graduates from four-year institutions' alternative certification programs.

In states where community colleges offer professional development and in-service programs, teacher satisfaction studies with the community college programs need to be conducted, particularly with those teachers who have also participated in in-service activities at four-year institutions.

What is certain is that community colleges are now louder voices in decisions about ways to increase and retain K-12 teachers. Community colleges' willingness to tread non-traditional paths in degree and program offerings will be controversial but will also increase the number of teacher education preparation programs, thus enabling more students to become teachers.

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